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Letter dated 9 April 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 9 April 1998, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Letter dated 9 April 1998 from Mr. Aytuğ Plümer addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 11 March 1998 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative at the United Nations (A/52/839-S/1998/260), which contains allegations regarding cultural property in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

Repeated allegations on the so-called "destruction of the cultural identity" of Northern Cyprus have been amply dealt with in our previous communications addressed to you, most recently in my letter dated 13 March 1998 (A/52/831-S/1998/241). I will therefore confine myself to reminding all concerned that in the process of realizing its age-old dream of Enosis (union of Cyprus with Greece), it has been the Greek Cypriot side that has systematically tried to eradicate the Turkish-Muslim heritage of Cyprus, in particular during the 1963-1974 period when mosques, shrines and other places of Muslim worship in Turkish Cypriot villages across the island were destroyed.

Today, the Greek Cypriot administration is still perpetuating a policy of religious intolerance towards the Islamic heritage in South Cyprus. Ottoman Turkish architecture in South Cyprus is under threat of disintegration as a result of neglect and in recent years Greek Cypriot enmity towards Turkish Cypriots has incited attacks on relics belonging to the Islamic heritage in South Cyprus. At the same time, the Greek Cypriot side is doing its utmost to hamper the efforts of the authorities of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus to secure financial and technical assistance from international organizations that would contribute towards the preservation of the cultural heritage of Northern Cyprus.

The Greek Cypriot allegations concerning the cultural heritage of Northern Cyprus are baseless and politically motivated. It is high time that all efforts by the Greek Cypriot side to exploit this issue for political purposes are stopped.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Aytuğ PLÜMER
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus